



OFFICE OF GOVERNOR PAT QUINN

NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
Friday, June 29, 2012

CONTACT: Brooke Anderson (o. 312-814-3158; c. 312-590-0195)
Annie Thompson (o. 217-782-7355; c. 217-720-1853)

Governor Quinn Signs Laws to Strengthen State Recovery Efforts in Harrisburg and Support Economic Growth

New Law Creates Natural Disaster Homestead Exemption to Provide Property Tax Relief to Families Hit by Tornado

CHICAGO – June 28, 2012. Governor Pat Quinn today signed two new laws to strengthen state recovery efforts in Harrisburg and support economic growth in Southern Illinois. House Bill 4242 creates a new Natural Disaster Homestead Exemption, which will provide much-needed tax relief for families who are rebuilding their homes after a wide-spread natural disaster. The new law is designed to aid families by allowing them to apply for a property tax exemption that is equal to the current value of their homes minus the value of the home when the disaster occurred.

"After a natural disaster, families need all the help we can give them, and we will continue to aid the people of Southern Illinois in their recovery" said Governor Quinn. "While nothing can replace what they lost, a break on their property taxes will relieve the financial burden of rebuilding their homes and their lives."

House Bill 4242, sponsored by Rep. Brandon Phelps (D-Harrisburg) and Sen. Gary Forby (D-Benton), continues the state's efforts to aid Southern Illinois' recovery following a deadly Feb. 29 tornado that devastated the area. Governor Quinn directed state officials to provide aid and assistance to homeowners and businesses in their recovery. Although the Governor's requests for federal assistance were denied by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the U.S. Small Business Administration approved a request for a disaster declaration. The declaration made low-interest loans available to homeowners, renters and businesses in nine Southern Illinois counties.

Under the new law, each county's chief assessor will establish the rules, timeframes and application deadlines for applying for the Natural Disaster Homestead Exemption. The new law creates two standards that applicants must meet in order to qualify for the exemption. First, the residential structure must be rebuilt within two years after the date of the natural disaster. Second, the square footage of the rebuilt residential structure may not be more than 110 percent of the square footage of the original residential structure as it existed immediately prior to the natural disaster. The exemption will remain valid for as long as that family lives in the house. If the property is sold or transferred, the exemption becomes invalid. The law goes into effect immediately.

Governor Quinn also signed House Bill 4445, sponsored by Rep. David Reis (R-Ste. Marie) and Sen. Dale Righter (R-Charleston), to continue efforts to grow the economy of downstate Illinois. The new law expands the Southeastern Illinois Economic Development Authority to include 27 members, an increase of the authority's current 10 member body. The authority promotes industrial, commercial and residential development, as well as transportation and other services in Southeastern Illinois. The new law goes into effect immediately.

###